Forex Factory in 2026: Calendar, News and Tools Guide

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Introduction

Eight thirty Eastern. A U.S. CPI print is about to drop. The London trader running EUR/USD has a choice: flatten the position ten minutes before the release, or hold and pray. Most professionals flatten. The retail traders who survive the next hour are usually the ones who saw the red folder icon on the Forex Factory economic calendar the night before and treated it as a no-trade window.

That is the core appeal of Forex Factory in 2026. It is still a free, ad-supported research stack aimed squarely at event-driven retail forex traders. The economic calendar remains its anchor product, but the site also bundles a news wire, a long-running forum, a verified Trade Journal feature, and a small but useful set of broker comparison widgets. None of these tools are unique on their own. Bundled together, and used with discipline, they form a surprisingly complete pre-event workflow for traders who cannot afford a Bloomberg-grade terminal.

This guide walks through each major section of the site, explains the mechanics that actually matter, and shows where Forex Factory is genuinely useful and where a trader should be more cautious. By the end, the reader will know how to read the calendar, how to filter news, how to evaluate a Trade Journal thread, and how to use the broker tools without being upsold.

What Forex Factory Is and Why Traders Still Rely on It

Forex Factory is a U.S.-registered retail trading community that has operated since the mid-2000s. The site is free to read and free to post, with revenue coming from display advertising and affiliate links to brokers. Three properties keep traders returning: a central bank and macroeconomic event calendar updated in real time, a live news wire that aggregates headlines from Dow Jones, Reuters and a few specialist feeds, and a trading forum where members post charts, journal entries, and broker feedback.

The site's main audience is the active retail FX trader, the kind who holds positions for hours to weeks and needs to know which central bank decision, employment release, or inflation print is going to move EUR/USD at 8:30 a.m. Eastern. Because Forex Factory targets that audience, almost every feature is designed to answer one question: when is the next tradable event, and how should I size around it? For a broader primer on how currency pairs respond to scheduled releases, the calendar is a good starting point,

but it works best inside a written trading plan.

Quick Facts

- Type: Free retail trading portal
- Primary market: Spot forex, with indices, commodities, and crypto coverage
- Cost: Free with ads; no premium tier
- Best for: Event-driven retail traders, swing traders, beginners learning economic releases
- Main risk: Affiliate-driven broker widgets and unverified forum posts

Reading the Economic Calendar: Icons, Filters and Time Zones

The economic calendar is the part of Forex Factory most traders come for. Every weekday release, central bank decision, and major speech is listed with the country, currency, time, forecast, previous reading, and a colored folder icon. The icons are the fastest way to gauge which events can actually move a pair.

Impact color coding on the economic calendar

Forex Factory uses three folder colors to mark expected volatility. Red, the highest tier, covers releases such as U.S. nonfarm payrolls, CPI, the Federal Reserve rate decision, ECB press conferences, and the U.K. CPI print. These are the events that routinely produce 30 to 80 pip moves on EUR/USD within minutes. Orange, the middle tier, covers secondary releases like retail sales, jobless claims, or the Empire State manufacturing index. These can move the market if they surprise, but often get absorbed by existing positioning. Yellow, the lowest tier, covers data such as housing sentiment, smaller central bank speeches, and auction results. Most traders ignore these unless the currency has nothing else on the calendar.

Folder Color	Impact Level	Typical Events	Market Behaviour
Red	High	NFP, CPI, Fed decision, ECB press conference	30-80 pip moves on EUR/USD
Orange	Medium	Retail sales, jobless claims, regional mfg	Moved on surprises, often absorbed
Yellow	Low	Housing sentiment, minor speeches, auctions	Usually ignored unless calendar is empty

The color is a forecast, not a guarantee. A "red folder" event that prints in line with consensus can still produce a muted reaction if positioning is light. A "yellow folder" surprise can be a 50-pip move if the market was leaning the other way. Treat the color as a sizing rule, not a verdict.

Time zone conversion and the 30-minute event filter

The default time zone is U.S. Eastern, which is a problem for traders in London, Tokyo, or Sydney. The site lets you switch the display time zone in user settings. Set it once, leave it alone, and the rest of the workflow will match the chart. Mixing calendar time with chart time is one of the most common retail trading errors, and the calendar's own filter is designed to prevent it.

A second, often overlooked filter is the +/- 30-minute window. Turning this on highlights every event whose

release falls within half an hour of a chosen anchor time. If a trader only wants to see the European morning, anchoring at 3:00 a.m. Eastern and the filter pulls in the 2:30 a.m., 3:00 a.m., and 3:30 a.m. releases. This is a cleaner way to plan a London open than scrolling through a wall of orange folders.

A practical pre-event filter

A London-session EUR/USD trader with a 5K account can use the calendar like this:
1. Open the calendar on Sunday night and filter for "USD" only.
2. Mark every red folder on the next 72 hours.
3. On Tuesday, the 8:30 a.m. Eastern CPI print shows up. Forecast 0.3% m/m, previous 0.2%.
4. The trader's rule is: no open positions in any pair with USD exposure 15 minutes before, and 15 minutes after, any red folder.
5. EUR/USD is closed at 8:15 a.m. The CPI surprise prints 0.5%. EUR/USD drops 60 pips in five minutes on the spike and then whipsaws. The trader's stop-out is never triggered because there is no position to stop out.

That is the whole point of the calendar. It does not predict the direction. It predicts the size of the event risk. The real mistake is holding a position through a red folder because the chart "looked good." Charts cannot see scheduled releases; the calendar can.

The News Wire and Breaking Headlines

The News Wire is a streaming headline feed that sits on the homepage, alongside the calendar. Forex Factory aggregates releases from Dow Jones, Reuters, a few regional wires, and a handful of specialist FX outlets. Headlines stream in real time during active sessions and slow overnight.

What the News Wire is good for

For a retail trader, the wire is most useful as a speed-of-information layer. Central bank speeches, surprise policy statements, and major geopolitical headlines tend to land on the wire within seconds of public release. If a trader is not at the chart, the wire tells them what just happened and roughly when.

It is also a clean way to audit one's own reactions. A trader who sees "ECB's Lagarde: disinflationary process is well underway" on the wire at 9:14 a.m. Eastern can check the EUR/USD chart at exactly 9:14 and see if there was a real move or a head fake. Over time, that audit reveals which headlines are tradable and which are noise.

What the News Wire is not

The wire is not a research product. It does not offer analysis, it does not transcribe press conferences, and it does not separate market-moving headlines from minor ones. The colourless headline stream means a trader has to do their own filtering. For a deeper read, sources like theFederal Reserve press archiveor theECB speeches pagestill need to be consulted directly.

The other limit is latency. By the time a headline reaches the wire, professional terminals and bank algos have often already priced it in. Anyone trading off the wire is accepting a structural information disadvantage against institutional flow. That disadvantage is smaller in slow markets (Asian session on USD/JPY) and brutal in fast ones (NFP release on EUR/USD).

> Key Takeaway: The News Wire is a confirmation tool, not a signal tool. Use it to time your reaction, not to generate the trade.

Forums, Trade Journals and Verified Performance

Beyond the calendar and the wire, Forex Factory hosts one of the longer-running retail trading forums on the web. Threads cover strategy, broker reviews, broker disputes, and Trade Journal entries. The community dynamic matters because the value of a forum scales with how seriously its members take the work.

Trade Journal and verified performance threads

The Trade Journal subforum is where the site tries to be more than a chat room. Members who claim a verified track record have linked their trading account to a third-party service that mirrors their statements. The verification badge does not mean the strategy is profitable, only that the trade history posted is the trade history that occurred. That distinction matters.

A useful way to read a Trade Journal thread is to treat it as a sample, not a recommendation. If a member is verified and posts 12 weeks of GBP/JPY swing trades with a 1.3 profit factor, that is a real sample. Compare it to a second journal running a different GBP/JPY system over the same 12 weeks. Both samples are honest only if the trader did not cherry-pick the period. As a reader, several checks are worth running:

- Check the worst drawdown, not the headline return
- Look for clusters of losses around known red folder events
- Check the average holding time against the claimed strategy
- Note whether the journal stops the day the strategy gets rough

The honest journals often stop. That is the cleanest signal that the trader is testing a system rather than marketing one.

What to Check	Why It Matters	What It Reveals
Worst drawdown	Headline returns hide pain	True risk tolerance of the system
Loss clusters	Events drive many losses	Whether the strategy respects the calendar
Average hold time	Strategy vs. execution drift	Discipline of the trader
Abrupt journal end	When did posting stop?	Whether results deteriorated silently

Forum dynamics you should know

The forum is a community, not a research department. Threads are public, but signal-to-noise is variable. Two forum rules are worth internalising before posting. "Search before you ask" is enforced, and most beginner questions on common topics (pip value, leverage, stop placement) have been answered a thousand times and can be found with a date filter. Broker complaint threads are useful as data, not as conclusions. A long complaint thread on a regulated broker can reflect a real operational issue or a single trader blaming the broker for a margin call. Read the regulator's enforcement history, for example theCFTC orFCAaction lists, before drawing a line from complaint to fraud.

Broker Tools: Spreads, Swaps and Account Comparisons

Forex Factory offers several free widgets that aggregate broker pricing. The two that matter for most retail traders are the spread comparison tool and the swap rate tool. Both pull from member-submitted data, which means coverage is uneven across brokers and pairs.

Broker spreads and swap comparison tools

The spread widget shows live or near-live average spreads on major pairs across a panel of brokers. If a trader is deciding between two ECN accounts, the spread widget tells them which one will cost less per round turn on EUR/USD. The swap tool shows the overnight carry on each pair, which matters for swing traders holding positions through the rollover.

Tool	What It Measures	Best Use Case	Key Caveat
Spread widget	Average live spreads across brokers	Comparing ECN account costs	Averages, not realised fills
Swap tool	Overnight carry by pair	Swing trade cost modelling	Shifts with rate policy
Broker panel	Account features and minimums	Initial broker screening	Affiliate-driven listings

Both tools are useful, but both carry the same caveat: they show average, not actual fill. On a nonfarm payroll release, the EUR/USD spread can widen from 0.6 pips to 6 pips at the worst broker and to 1.5 pips at the best. The widget will not warn about that spike. The right way to use it is as a base-rate check, not as a live pricing feed.

A second, structural point: Forex Factory earns affiliate revenue when an account is opened through certain links. That does not make the data bad, but it does mean the broker panel is not independent in the way a regulator's broker checker is. For a list of firms authorised to hold client money in any jurisdiction, the officialFINRA BrokerCheckor the local regulator's register is the correct source. Always cross-check any broker being considered with the relevantSECorCFTCfilings before funding an account.

Sentiment Indicators and the Home Dashboard

The home page of Forex Factory displays a small set of sentiment indicators, mostly long/short positioning on the major pairs. The data is taken from retail broker flows, not from CFTC Commitments of Traders reports, so it tracks the retail crowd, not the institutional one.

Market sentiment indicators on the home dashboard

Sentiment indicators work best as contrarian signals at extremes. If 85% of retail traders on the EUR/USD dashboard are long, that is usually a sign the trade is crowded, not a confirmation of the trend. Counter-trend mean reversion strategies often use this kind of data to fade extremes. Trend-following strategies usually ignore it.

Indicator Type	Source	Best For	Main Weakness
Forex Factory sentiment	Retail broker flows	Fading crowd extremes	Tracks retail, not institutions
CFTC COT report	Institutional positions	Real money positioning	Weekly lag, broad buckets
Implied volatility	Options market	Event risk pricing	Requires options account

There are two real limitations. First, retail sentiment is a poor proxy for the CFTC report, which tracks hedge funds, asset managers, and large speculators. If a view of institutional positioning is needed, the Commitments of Traders report is the correct tool, not the Forex Factory widget. Second, the dashboard updates with a lag and only covers the most liquid pairs. If exotic pairs are traded, the trader is on their own.

Building a Pre-Event Routine With Forex Factory

The site is most useful as part of a routine, not as a stand-alone decision tool. A working trader's weekly workflow can be built entirely around free Forex Factory features:

1. Sunday night, 15 minutes. Open the calendar, switch the time zone to local chart time, and mark every red folder for the week ahead.
2. Each morning, five minutes. Scan the News Wire for any unscheduled central bank speech or surprise headline from Asia. Add any new events to the calendar.
3. Pre-event, 10 minutes. For each red folder, decide one of three positions: trade it, sit out, or reduce. Apply the same rule to all open positions 15 minutes before release. Review position sizing against the upcoming event.
4. Post-event, five minutes. Read the wire, check the chart at the exact time of the headline, and update the trading journal with the actual pip move.
5. Weekly review, 30 minutes. Compare the pre-event plan to the actual market reaction. Note where the calendar's red folder actually delivered and where it did not. Over a few months, this builds a personal sample of how each major release behaves.

Step	Duration	Action	Output
Sunday setup	15 min	Mark red folders for the week	Weekly event map
Morning scan	5 min	Check News Wire for surprises	Updated calendar
Pre-event	10 min	Decide: trade, sit, or reduce	Position plan
Post-event	5 min	Log actual market reaction	Journal entry
Weekly review	30 min	Compare plan vs. result	Performance sample

That routine costs nothing and scales with experience. A beginner who runs it for six months will know more about how U.S. CPI moves EUR/USD than most casual readers of a paid newsletter. The same routine also exposes where personal reactions go wrong: a calendar that shows a 40-pip move after a trader was stopped out at 8 pips on the spike is a clear signal that the stop was placed inside the event window, not outside it.

Risks, Limits and Common Mistakes

Forex Factory is free, but free has a cost. Three honest risks to weigh before relying on any of its features:

- Affiliate bias on broker widgets. The broker panel reflects which firms pay the site, not necessarily the safest or cheapest option. Cross-check any broker with the national regulator's register and withFINRA BrokerCheckif the firm is U.S.-registered.
- Forum survivorship bias. The strategies that get posted are the ones that did not blow up. The strategies that did are silent. Read any Trade Journal for the worst drawdown, not the headline return, and assume posted returns are upper bound, not midpoint.

- Calendar confidence. The colored folders are a forecast of impact, not a guarantee. A "yellow folder" surprise can produce 40-pip moves and a "red folder" in-line print can produce none. Sizing rules should be set by realised volatility, not by icon color.

Risk	What Goes Wrong	How to Mitigate
Affiliate bias	Broker panel is not independent	Cross-check with regulators
Survivorship bias	Posted returns are upper bound	Read drawdowns, not headlines
Calendar overconfidence	Icon color is a forecast, not a fact	Size by realised volatility
Latency on the wire	Bank algos move first	Treat wire as confirmation only
Unverified forum posts	Anyone can claim a strategy	Require verification badges

A common beginner mistake is to treat Forex Factory as a signal service. It is not. It is a research stack. The signal is still the trader's own. The same warning applies to any third-party community: without an understanding of the underlying market structure, no calendar will save a leveraged position on a thin liquidity pair. Markets that look like "free setups" on the calendar are usually the ones where the retail crowd is most exposed.

> Risk Warning: Trading spot forex on margin carries substantial risk. Leverage can amplify both gains and losses. Before relying on any tool, build a written plan, define your maximum loss per trade, and never risk capital you cannot afford to lose.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I use the Forex Factory economic calendar?

Open the calendar, set the time zone in user settings, then apply the currency filter for the pairs traded. Sort by impact and mark the red folder events for the day. Use the +/- 30-minute filter to anchor a session and only show releases that fall inside the trading window.

What is Forex Factory used for?

It is used as a free research portal for retail FX traders. The site aggregates an economic calendar, a live news wire, a trading forum, and a small set of broker pricing tools. Most traders use it to plan around scheduled macroeconomic releases and to audit broker pricing.

Why do forex traders rely on Forex Factory?

The calendar, news wire, and forum are all in one place and free. For event-driven retail traders, that combination replaces a stack of paid tools. The community also gives a long historical record of how the same release has moved the same pair, which is useful for sizing positions.

When does Forex Factory release daily news?

The News Wire updates continuously, 24 hours a day, five days a week. Headlines stream faster during London and New York sessions and slow down during the Asian session. Weekend coverage focuses on

geopolitical headlines and previews of the following week's events.

Can Forex Factory help predict market volatility?

Not directly. The colored folders estimate how impactful a release is expected to be, not what the realised move will be. The site also shows historical pip ranges and some implied volatility data, which can be used to size positions around an event. A red folder is a sizing rule, not a direction.

Is Forex Factory free to use?

Yes. The site is free to read and free to post. Revenue comes from display advertising and from affiliate links to brokers. There is no paid tier and no premium calendar. The cost is the ads and the affiliate-driven broker widgets, both of which should be factored into any workflow.

Does Forex Factory cover crypto and indices?

Coverage of major currency pairs, gold, oil, U.S. indices, and Bitcoin is solid. Coverage of smaller altcoins, single-stock CFDs, and certain regional markets is thinner. For those instruments a separate data source is required.

Can beginners rely on the Trade Journal threads?

Only as a sample. Verified journals are useful because the trade history is the trade history that occurred. The strategies posted are not recommendations, and posted returns should be expected to be the upper end of what the strategy actually delivered across all market conditions.

Conclusion

Forex Factory remains the closest thing the retail FX world has to a free Bloomberg-style research stack. The economic calendar, the news wire, the Trade Journal, and the broker pricing tools each do a specific job, and they do it without charging a subscription. The honest limit is that none of them substitute for understanding market structure, position sizing, and risk. Tools reveal the event; the trader decides the bet.
A practical next step: open the calendar this Sunday, set the time zone to match the chart, mark every red folder for the week, and run the five-step pre-event routine above for one month. After thirty days the trader will have a real sample of how the pairs they actually trade react to the events they actually trade, and they will know which Forex Factory features earn a place in the workflow and which ones can be left alone.
> Risk Warning: Forex trading carries substantial risk and is not suitable for every investor. Leverage can amplify both gains and losses. Before relying on any tool, including Forex Factory, build a written plan, define your maximum loss per trade, and never risk capital you cannot afford to lose.

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